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ABSTRACT

For the individual seeking a counselor education faculty position, the journey is a complicated process. In addition to the assistance given to doctoral students, it is important for these students to be self-advocates in their own professional development. This paper provides suggestions, information, and self-advocacy recommendations for doctoral students in counselor education programs seeking a full-time, tenure track, counselor faculty position. It highlights guidelines for effectively developing appropriate competencies. The importance of support during this process and a checklist of recommended experiences are also included. Appendix A is Counselor Education Checklist. (JDM)

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Running head: COUNSELOR EDUCATOR

Beyond Curriculum:

The Development of a Counselor Educator

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Abstract

This article provides suggestions, information, and self-advocacy recommendations for doctoral students in counselor education programs (counselor education and supervision, marriage and family counseling/therapy, and clinical mental health counseling) seeking a full-time, tenure track, counselor education faculty position. Guidelines for effectively developing appropriate competencies are suggested. The importance of support during your journey and a checklist of recommended experiences are also presented.

Beyond Curriculum:

The Development of a Counselor Educator

As those individuals seeking counselor education faculty positions are aware, the journey one takes to reach the professional goal of faculty is a long and often times complicated process. Warnke, Bethany, and Hedstrom (1999) recently examined this issue from the standpoint of what advisors can do to assist doctoral students seeking counselor education positions. This article posits that in addition to the assistance given to doctoral students, it is also imperative for these students to be self-advocates in their own professional development.

Doctoral students wanting to become tenure track counselor educators need an awareness of the opportunities outside their program curriculum. A doctoral program in counselor education, especially if it is accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), provides a good basis for the future counselor educator. CACREP, the accrediting body of the American Counseling Association (ACA) was created by ACA and its divisions to implement standards of preparation for the counseling profession's graduate-level degree programs (Hollis, 1997). CACREP is dedicated to preparing counseling and related professionals to provide services consistent with the ideal of optimal human development (CACREP, 1999). Further, CACREP's (1999) vision is to provide leadership and to promote excellence in professional preparation through the accreditation of counseling and related educational programs. Although CACREP now operates as an independent council, it remains the primary accreditation body for the counseling profession (Schmidt, 1999). However, as the competition for counselor education positions increase, doctoral students need to increase their marketability by going beyond what is required in their curriculum.

First, this article recommends ways in which doctoral students can secure the additional experiences they need to find positions as counselor educators. The importance of self-advocacy and support are endorsed. Second, a checklist of experiences for doctoral students to use as a guide in assessing their competencies has been identified.

Getting Started

Doctoral students need to begin preparing themselves for positions in academia at the time of their initial interview for their doctoral program. It is essential to ensure that the program being applied to will assist in developing your counseling competencies. Graduates from a CACREP approved doctoral program may have a significant advantage when seeking employment over graduates from programs not so accredited. As more universities are following CACREP guidelines, these institutions are looking for future faculty who are trained in and familiar with these requirements. Although your initial interview at a university is part of the screening process for the program, it is also an opportunity to investigate for yourself what the program offers. Ask questions about the opportunities that are incorporated into the program and which opportunities are readily available. These opportunities include participating in research with faculty, receiving departmental support for professional presentations at conferences, as well as opportunities in teaching and supervising master's level classes. Doctoral students need to plan a "course of action" early in their studies to ensure ample time for opportunities.

Most importantly, doctoral students need to become self-advocates. Although most counselor educators are willing to advise students in their preparation for counselor education positions (Warnke et al., 1999), it is up to the student to advocate for himself or herself to ensure that opportunities become available to them. Doctoral students need to be aware of what qualifications are required for a position in the academic world. For example, a typical counselor

education academic position prefers that the candidate have a doctoral degree from a CACREP accredited institution and be licensed or licensed eligible in that state (American Counseling Association, 1999a). Forty-five states and the District of Columbia have counselor licensure (American Counseling Association, 1999b). Of these, most accept a curriculum that is based on a CACREP model. Licensure is also attainable at the Masters' level and/or sixty semester hours of graduate-level counseling courses and two to three years of supervised experience. Therefore, it is very possible to attain a counseling license before completing your doctoral program. These positions also require that the candidate have a record of scholarly publications and research. Seek out job postings and note what experience universities are expecting from prospective candidates. Speak with counselor educators already in the field. Network with your own institution's faculty as well as counselor educators from other institutions to find out what is being required from their counselor education faculty. Examine the recommendations from your professional organizations such as the American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA), the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES), and the American Counseling Association (ACA). Researching the requirements for counselor education faculty positions can be completed throughout your doctoral program.

Advancing Doctoral Candidate Competencies

Doctoral students should begin a checklist of all the opportunities and experiences they should try to secure while in their counselor education program. Once the initial research on the qualifications of a counselor educator is gathered, an examination of the professional vita is warranted. Additional items needed to present the doctoral student as a "well-rounded" counselor educator candidate are essential.

First, applicants for faculty positions must have a current vita. Continually add to your vita as you accomplish your goals. This will provide the opportunity to identify what areas still need to be accomplished. It is recommended that the vita of a trusted faculty member who has years of experience in the field be sought out and examined. His or her vita can be used as a model upon which many of your own goals can be based.

Second, assess the level of your practitioner experience. Your doctoral program most likely includes a counseling practicum. Should this be the only actual experience in counseling, you may want to consider securing additional experiences as it is important to not only comprehend theories but also to apply them to real world counseling situations. A level of competency in a specialty clinical area is not only important in securing a faculty position but in your development as a sound professional counselor. In addition, complete the state requirements for licensure as quickly as possible. Your state licensure may assist your marketability, not only in terms of being able to supervise students, but also in instructing practicum and other advanced classes.

Third, identify your experiences in supervision. Again, most programs include a course in the supervision of counselors. It is recommended, however, that doctoral students be able to demonstrate competency in this area. According to Getz (1999), supervisors are expected to develop competence in case conceptualization and be able to accurately assess clients' needs and their counseling progress. Therefore, additional experiences in supervision should be sought. Check with your department chair to see if other opportunities such as being able to help supervise in a group counseling class are available.

Fourth, having experience teaching at the university level will lead to increased counselor education competencies as well as marketability for faculty positions. Some doctoral programs in

counselor education have this experience built into the curriculum, however many do not. Competency in teaching should be demonstrated before seeking a counselor education position. Again, check with your department chair to see what opportunities are available. If your department has an undergraduate population, this may be an avenue to acquire teaching experience. If not, check to see what other opportunities might be available for teaching at the master's level. Ask for opportunities to be a teaching assistant to a faculty member. In addition, other universities in your area may have part-time teaching positions available, and may employ individuals still completing their doctoral coursework.

Fifth, professional presentations are an essential part of becoming a counselor educator. It is recommended that you present professionally at least once a year if not more. Ask to present with your advisor or another professor with similar interests. Ask to present with your fellow doctoral students. Experience at the national, state, and local levels is indispensable.

Sixth, professional publication is a necessity, especially if a tenure-track position in counselor education is being sought. This means publishing in addition to your dissertation. However, take advantage of all the extensive work put into your dissertation. Three to four articles can come from your dissertation work depending on the size of your study. Again, ask your advisor, other faculty, and your peers about opportunities to publish with them. Do not hesitate, however, to attempt publishing on your own. Utilize the hard work put into your own research papers and adapt them for publication standards.

Seventh, research is an important aspect in the world of academia. Most faculty are doing research in their area of interest and usually seek assistance from students to be on their research team. Competency in conducting research is important to your marketability. Grant writing experience is included in this section as well. If "hands on" experience with grant writing is

unattainable, seek out workshops that are offered on the subject. Knowledge of how the process of grant writing operates can be just as beneficial as the actual experience of grant writing itself.

Eighth, service to the profession and involvement in departmental activities can add to your marketability as a counselor educator. Join counselor interest networks through the American Counseling Association or the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision. Volunteer at your local American Red Cross' Mental Health Disaster Trauma Team or on the board of an area mental health agency. Ask if your department sponsors speakers and workshops. Offer your assistance in helping organize these functions. Participate in candidate searches at your university. This, in particular, will provide a great opportunity to see exactly what is expected of a candidate.

Finally, participation in professional organizations helps to enhance professional identity. Joining both the national and state level of the American Counseling Association, the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision, and the American Mental Health Counselors Association are recommended. In addition, join the local chapter of Chi Sigma Iota. Chi Sigma Iota is an International Counseling Academic and Professional Honor Society whose purpose is to promote scholarship, research, professionalism, and excellence in counseling, and to recognize high attainment in the pursuit of academic and clinical excellence in the field of counseling (Chi Sigma Iota, 1994). All of these organizations not only are a great resource for information but also helpful in networking. Chi Sigma Iota may also be a good avenue for professional presentations. Therefore, your checklist should include a vita, practicum, supervision, teaching, professional presentations, professional publications, research/grant writing, involvement in departmental activities, and professional membership (see Appendix for checklist).

Summary

Recommended activities have been outlined that should increase the competency of the doctoral student as well as marketability for those seeking a counselor education faculty position. It is noted that the recommendations presented take considerable time and effort from the doctoral student. Therefore it is stressed that this be an ongoing process throughout the career as both a student and faculty member. In addition, the recommendations made should not be viewed as merely enhancing the appearance of your professional vita. First and foremost is your successful development of a clinically competent counselor. These experienced have been outlined as potential areas upon which future counselor educators base their experiences. Most importantly, the doctoral student could conduct these suggested activities without placing dependence on the faculty advisor for direction and answers.

Networking with your colleagues and cohorts can greatly enhance your ability to accomplish your goals. Work together for your mutual benefit. In addition to family, your colleagues and cohorts can be a source of support. Help your family, however, to understand the demands that you are confronting. With their support, your family can become your greatest ally.

According to Hollis (1997), more skills and competencies are being required of graduates. It is important to anticipate trends in the field of counselor education. Keep apprised of these trends and adapt your focus accordingly. CACREP graduates in counselor education have increased dramatically over the past decade. Hollis reported that in 1993, approximately 28% of these graduates secured positions as faculty members in institutions of higher education. In 1996, it has increased to 34%. Although there has been an increase in CACREP accredited institutions, there is no strong evidence that doctoral students from non-CACREP institutions are

any less proficient than those that do (Schmidt, 1999). Consequently, it is more important than ever to advocate for yourself.

The suggestions offered in this article should be viewed as the "ideal situation." It is recognized that other obligations such as family and work may have limiting effects on the potential opportunities sought out. As a counselor, it is important to keep all the roles in your life as balanced as possible. Above all else, a healthy counselor educator should be promoted.

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Appendix

Counselor Education Checklist

Prepare your vita

_____ Secure sample vita

_____ Review vita regularly

Practitioner experience

_____ Practicum class

_____ Additional practical experience

_____ Assess for competency

Supervision experience

_____ Supervision class

_____ Additional supervision experience

_____ Assess for competency

Teaching experience

_____ Teach introductory course

_____ Secure teaching assistant position

_____ Assess for competency

Professional presentations

_____ National presentation

_____ State presentation

_____ Local presentation

Professional publications

_____ Dissertation

_____ Additional publications

Research activities

_____ Join research team

_____ Grant writing experience

_____ Assess for competency

Service to the profession/departmental activities

_____ Join a counselor interest network

_____ Volunteer in a mental health service capacity

_____ Assist in organizing departmental functions

_____ Participate in candidate searches

Membership in professional organizations

_____ American Counseling Association

_____ Your state Counseling Association

_____ Association for Counselor Education and Supervision

_____ Your state Association for Counselor Education and Supervision

_____ American Mental Health Counselors Association

_____ Your state Mental Health Counselors Association

_____ Chi Sigma Iota